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Service Finds Listing Three Arizona Plants Not Warranted After 12-Month Status Review

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announced today the results of a 12-month status review on a petition to protect three plants found in southern Arizona, the Santa Rita yellowshow (*Amoreuxia gonzalezii*), Huachuca milk-vetch (*Astragalus hypoxylus*), and Fish Creek fleabane (*Erigeron piscaticus*) as endangered or threatened, with critical habitat, under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). After review of the best scientific and commercial information available, the Service finds that listing these three plants is not warranted at this time.

These three plant species were petitioned for listing under the ESA in 2007 as part of the 475 species petition by the WildEarth Guardians. In 2009, the Service made a positive 90-day finding for all three species. The primary threats that were listed in the petition were: urban and mining development and grazing for *A. gonzalezii*; degradation of habitat from livestock grazing, impacts from recreation, and indirect effects on bees to *A. hypoxylus*; and recreational impacts, poor watershed conditions, flooding, and small population size for *E. piscaticus*. This positive finding initiated a 12-month status review by the Service.

During the status review, additional information was collected, and a thorough threats analysis was completed using the best available scientific and commercial information. The Service found that the potential threats are not of sufficient imminence, intensity, or magnitude to indicate that these three plants are in danger of extinction, or are likely to become extinct within the foreseeable future throughout all of their range. However, the Service is asking the public to submit any new information that becomes available concerning the threats to Santa Rita yellowshow, Huachuca milk-vetch, and Fish Creek fleabane or their habitats at any time.

The Santa Rita yellowshow is a perennial plant in the Bixaceae family (Lipstick tree). The plant has a thickened starchy to woody rootstock, erect stems up to 20 in. in height, and long-stalked

leaves that are parted into five to seven spoon-shaped lobes. The flowers are branched clusters with salmon to yellow colored flowers and maroon marks at the base of the upper and lower petals. This plant is found primarily in South America, Central America, and Mexico. In the United States, it has been found in the Devil's Cashbox area in the Santa Rita Mountains and Thomas Canyon in the Baboquivari Mountains in southeastern Arizona. The plants occur in the foothills at an elevation of 4,300 to 4,599 ft. on steep limestone slopes and ridge tops. The Service believes that these southeastern Arizona locations represent the northernmost distribution of this species.

Huachuca milk-vetch is a perennial in the Fabaceae (Pea) family. This species forms a compact mat of stems that typically lay flat against the ground, although the outer ends of the stems may turn up. The mat can be up to 6 in. in diameter with leaves that are 0.1 to 0.2 in. long. The leaves are bicolored; the undersides are gray with sparse tiny hairs; the tops are yellowish-green, smooth, and hairless and have a distinct fold along the midrib. The flowers are approximately 0.2 in. long with petals that are whitish, with light purple tips. The plants are found in oak-savannah habitat at an elevation of approximately 5,500 ft. The current known distribution of *A. hypoxylus* is along the Harshaw Road in the Patagonia Mountains, in Bear, Scotia, and Sycamore canyons in the Huachuca Mountains, and in Collins Canyon in the Canelo Hills in southeastern Arizona.

Fish Creek fleabane is an annual plant in the Asteraceae (Sunflower) family. The plant is typically 6 to 16 in. in height, multi-branched, found trailing or lying on the ground, and is covered with coarse, stiff hair. One to 4 flower heads are produced per plant, each 0.2 to 0.3 in. across with a white corolla. The very small flower heads, coupled with entire (toothless) leaves are key factors distinguishing this species from close relatives. The species is known from two confirmed areas in south-central Arizona: Fish Creek Canyon and the Aravaipa Canyon Preserve, and are associated with floodplain terraces in riparian areas. An additional site is currently under investigation in the Santa Catalina Mountains near Tucson.

This finding is available on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> at Docket Number FWS-R2-ES-2011-0081. Supporting documentation used in preparing this finding is available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours by contacting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Ecological Services Field Office, 2321 W. Royal Palm Road, Suite 103, Phoenix, AZ 85021; telephone (602) 242-0210; facsimile (602) 242-2513. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), please call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at (800) 877-8339.

The Service requests that any new information concerning the distribution and status of, or threats to these three plants be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office above whenever it becomes available. New information will help the Service to monitor them and support ongoing conservation activities. If an emergency situation develops the Service will act to provide immediate protection.

America's fish, wildlife and plant resources belong to all of us, and ensuring the health of imperiled species is a shared responsibility. We're working to actively engage conservation partners and the public in the search for improved and innovative ways to conserve and recover imperiled species.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwshq, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>.

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